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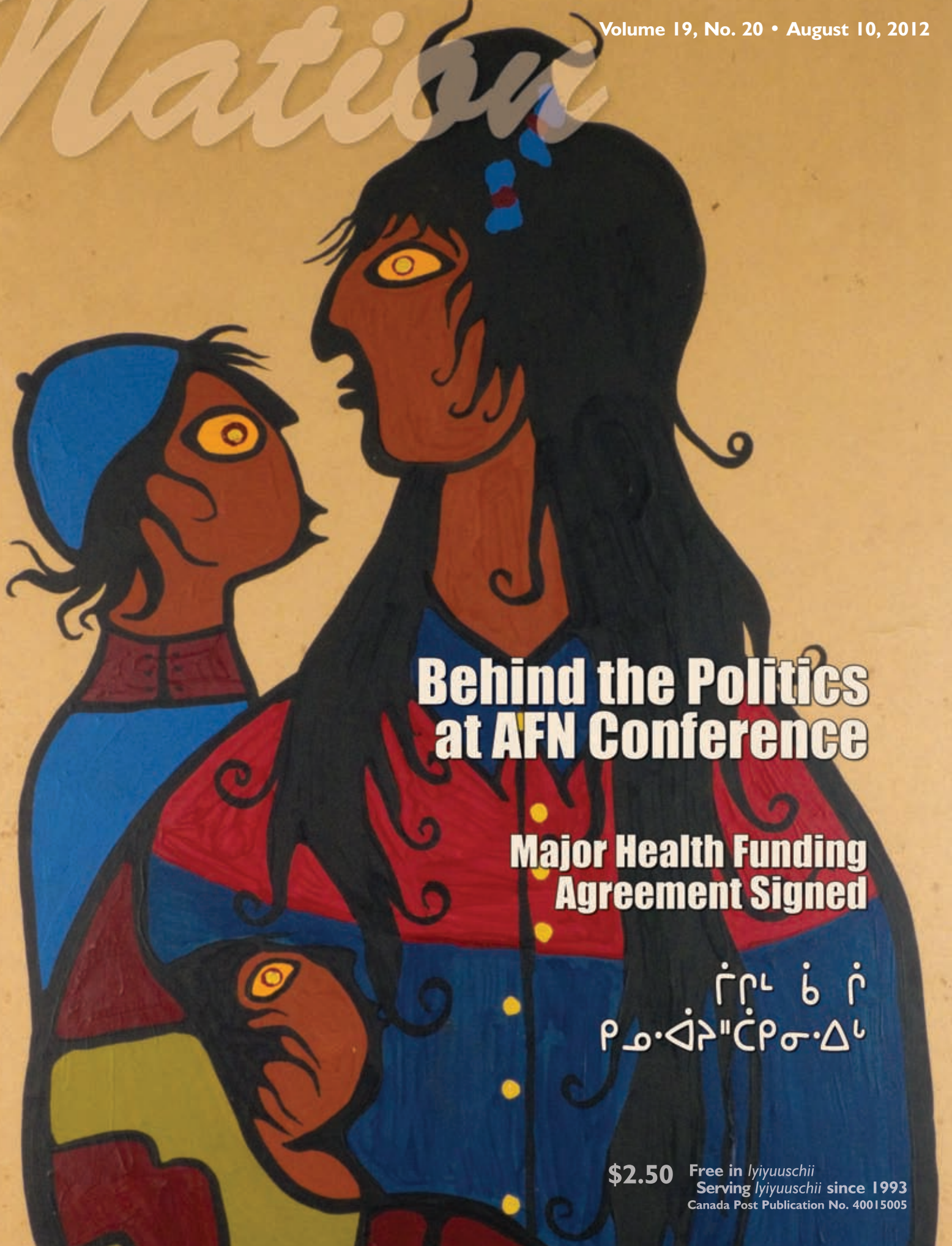

Behind the Politics at AFN Conference

Major Health Funding Agreement Signed

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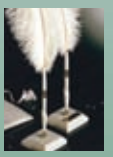

The Rule of law

by Will Nicholls

When you have Aboriginal blood in your veins you feel and know that the rule of law in Canada isn't so blind or predisposed to honour the principle that every person is equal under the law. When a disproportionate percentage of Aboriginals are behind bars it says something about the law. When more Aboriginal children are presently in foster homes than the entire amount put in residential schools in the past you know the law isn't on your side. Look at the number of First Nations trying to get treaties or have them honoured in the courts over the course of many years – and again you know.

But every now and then life throws a curve ball. Somehow you manage to hit the ball out of the park. That's what it felt like when a Federal Court of Canada decision handed down August 1 on a legal dispute between Attawapiskat First Nation and the Government of Canada. Even though the feds had already removed the notorious third-party management official imposed on the community months ago, this community said the fight wasn't over. Canada's Federal Court ruled that the appointment was "unreasonable" and "did not respond in a reasonable way to the root of the problems at Attawapiskat nor the remedies available…"

Though many blamed the party in power the court didn't agree, however, saying, "The problem in this case does not lie at the feet of the political masters but in the hands of the bureaucracy."

Even so, later in the judgment the Court exonerated the same government officials, saying they were concerned but that the "problem seems to have been a lack of understanding."

The decision acknowledged that residents "were living in overcrowded and unsafe conditions in uninsulated and unserviced dwellings or in tents where sanitation was a bucket and where mold was rampant." They went on to add, "The situation was an embarrassment to a country as rich, strong and generous as Canada."

The "Background" section of the Court's decision detailed the requests, proposals and information the Attawapiskat First Nation sent to Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (AANDC) in a timeline format. During this process the Court said that at no time did AANDC officials indicate there was any problem with Band management. Of course Attawapiskat was already under co-management. One wonders if anyone investigated the co-manager?

Prime Minister Harper had defended the government saying it had spent "some $90 million since coming to office just on Attawapiskat." While the number crunching may not tally for some folks he expanded on that theme saying, "That's over $50,000 for every man, woman and child in the community. Obviously we're not very happy that the results do not seem to have been achieved for that. We're concerned about that, we have officials looking into it and taking action."

Should he have mentioned the annual average cost of keeping an inmate incarcerated was $113,974 per year? This tells us that it costs more to keep a First Nations person incarcerated than to allow them freedom.

Even with the Federal Court upholding the rule of law, I turn to the legendary Sauk war chief Black Hawk for guidance to interpret this decision. "How smooth must be the language of the whites," he said, "when they can make right look like wrong, and wrong like right."

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rez notes

Vote for me (if you want to live)

by Sonny Orr

Remember when the once buff Arnold, as the Terminator, extended his hand to a distraught woman, asking her to come with him to escape a barrage of bullets and the wrath of another human robot bent on destroying any chance of humanity for the future? Well expect the same act from many candidates in the upcoming provincial elections. They will offer themselves as the only hope for Quebec's continued survival. Although using the Terminator as a parallel may seem absurd, there is some similarity to the election platforms of the aspiring candidates who wish to lead us into an uncertain future.

What awaits us in the future one may ask? I have a crystal ball of sorts that tells me what kind of Quebec could emerge, a version that everyone might actually like. First of all, I am not a candidate, so don't take my word that whatever you read in this column actually makes any sense. I am just testing the grounds for my inane ability to forecast the future...

Once, many years ago, the lands of the north and of the Cree were just that, lands of the people of the tundra and taiga. On occasion, the moose would get some respect and the salmon was the king of the seas. The people who depended on living the life of freedom to hunt and fish were merely a tiny island in the sea of demographics. Come any sort of election, the most any one could hope and vote for was for our own chiefs and councillors. That often meant voting for family, but hey, back then, only a few families could lay claim to a leadership role. Then, after a few hours of voting, the chief and council got elected (or chief and family members) and the community settled back to the daily business of getting by on what a larger government would hand out.

Then, came the regional entities, for which we got to vote for someone who often didn't come from our own community. Thus, regional elections, now commonplace, are the scope of our daily political wanderings and few of us focus on larger provincial or national elections.

Today, a whole slew of elections and promises seem to land in our mailbox and on telephone poles. Candidates who we have probably never met want our attention and our votes cast in their favour – in exchange (usually) for some silly promise.

Hey, when will a candidate ever come forth and promise a perfect sunrise, a cloudless day and glorious sunset? Perhaps, one day, some candidate will actually address the real issues at hand and carry out election promises. But, we all live on planet Earth and not in a perfect hereafter, so those promises could more often than not be considered as outright lies. You know, I always said that elections are not about politics or promises, or even trying to get something done in the 40- 60 month time frame of a political mandate. No... it's all about getting votes.

So, when you look at all the possible candidates who are popping out of the woodwork right now and asking for you to choose your future based on their vision, choose wisely. Or else, the winning political body just might do what they said they were going to do.

As the Terminator promised, the future is brighter when you get salvation. Then again, the Terminator had already a heads up on what the future held. In one scenario, there is no future. You have to accept the hand that will take you to a future that is real. So, be careful, and choose wisely. The future depends on it.

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Historic redress

Quebec and Cree ink landmark Governance Agreement at National Assembly ceremony

by Amy German

Cree drummers gathered in a circle to pound out a traditional beat in Quebec's National Assembly July 24 to mark the historic signing of the Agreement on Governance in Eeyou Istchee James Bay Territory between the Crees and the Province of Quebec.

Members of the Grand Council of the Crees, including Grand Chief Matthew Coon Come, Deputy Grand Chief Ashley Iserhoff, Quebec-Cree Negotiator Able Bosum as well as Abitibi-Baie-James-Nunavik-Eeyou MP Romeo Saganash sat alongside members of the National Assembly for the ceremony.

The new Agreement was the product of over two years of negotiations between the province and the Crees. It was driven by Quebec's need to clear away obstacles to the ambitious development plans under the Plan Nord.

The 48-page Agreement will see responsibility restored to the Crees over category Category I, II and III lands, particularly when it comes to land management and control over natural resources.

While provisions for the Crees had been made within the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement, the adoption of Bill 40 in 2001 severely weakened Cree jurisdiction over these lands, while placing it in the hands of non-Native populations to the south.

Not only will the vast Municipalité de Baie James be abolished through this Agreement, a new regional government will be created in its wake that will consist of both Crees and Jamiesians sharing equal votes and powers.

The Agreement will also give the Crees exclusive jurisdiction over hydro-electric projects of 50 MW or less and wind projects within certain areas of the territory.

"I hope that this Agreement will have the same quality of the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement, as I want to repeat today, it is a living document, and should be recognized as a living document, able to evolve, change and adapt to circumstances," commented Quebec Premier Jean Charest commented, "I said to the Grand Chief Coon Come earlier this morning that he and I and all of us should be able to devise Agreements able to incorporate and to adapt to circumstances that none of us will have imagined on this day but that our children and grandchildren may face."

Cree Grand Chief Matthew Coon Come observed, "The unifying element of our governance initiatives is that we are now capable of relying on the land, as we have always done, for our future subsistence and well-being.

"We are also assured of the opportunity to put our common desire into practice for sustainable and orderly development for the benefit of all people in our region – Crees and James Bay residents – and ultimately for all Quebecers," Coon Come added.

The Grand Chief went on to say that the signing between the Crees and the province was not only a contribution to the history of Quebec but also to the history of Aboriginal peoples in Canada. That it has aligned the great forces of history with the principles of human rights, inclusion, social justice, and harmony and this would be something that not only the Cree Nation but all of Quebec and perhaps Canada would benefit from an unshakable commitment to these principles.

Also attending the signing was Native Affairs Geoffrey Kelley, who stated, "This has considerably changed our negotiation processes and will ensure more positive, equal, and constructive relations. This new structure illustrates the Government of Quebec's openness, attentiveness, and good faith. It speaks of a new era: one of cooperation in which other profound changes can occur faster."

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This is why we ask you to participate by using reusable dishes and washing them,
sorting your waste and helping clean up the community.**

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Eeyou Istchee Tourism
Tourisme Eeyou Istchee

Art rascals

Laughing spirits and other inspirations at the Montreal First People's Festival

by Akiva Levitas

New Project by Christine Sioui-Wawanoloath

An "inveterate rascal," Azban is a laughing spirit who lives in a world of unbridled growth and irrepressible abundance. Abernaki-Wendat artist Christine Sioui-Wawanoloath draws her inspiration from the lively spirit world of Azban. And that's why the 22nd edition of the Montreal First Peoples' Festival titled her exhibition "Masks, Drawings, and Other Laughing Spirits."

The exhibition, which debuted July 18, will be around until August 11 at the Canadian Guilds of Crafts in the artists' district in downtown Montreal. The pieces on display range from masks Sioui-Wawanoloath made specifically for events to beautifully crafted hand-painted bowls as well as intricate yet stylistically simple drawings with a traditional theme.

The annual Montreal First Peoples' Festival, organized by Land Insights, is a varied showcase of all that First Peoples' culture has to offer, from music and films offered at venues around Montreal and Kahnawake, to delicious traditional foods as well as artwork and poetry presentations.

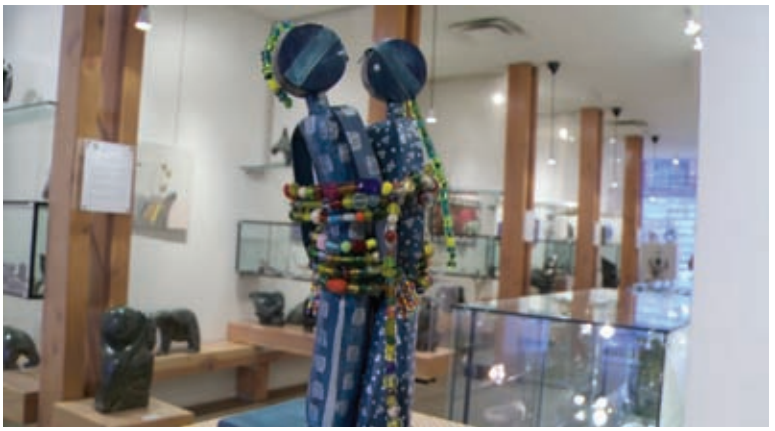
This will be the third year that the Montreal First Peoples' Festival is holding events at the Place des Festivals, providing it with the same exposure as the other great Montreal festivals.

"We're far from having the same budget as the other festivals that precede us, so it is a big challenge to stand [at the same] level that the public expects," said the president of Land InSights, Andre Dudemaine. "Happily enough we have a genius, Michele Marcelin, a set designer for films and we have the best installations along with the Aboriginal artists who bring their soul there so we are the best of the best."

The exhibition is one of five art exhibitions being offered by Land InSights that are available for viewing during the festival. The exhibition entitled "Offerings" by France Trépanier will be on display at the Place des Festivals August 2-5.

During the opening July 18, Sioui-Wawanoloath spoke of what each of the pieces represented and from where she drew her inspiration. For Azban, he was portrayed as a blue-winged spirit with swirls on his body reflecting the chaos that surrounds him. Her favourite piece was inspired by a wedding ceremony she witnessed a long time ago: "The groom circled the bride with long rope until they were bound together in a loving embrace."

Another piece features a single figure holding a bird in his hands with a strand of beads and a skyward gaze. She drew her inspiration from her peoples' traditional belief that birds carry their prayers. The significance of



Marriage Dolls by Christine Sioui-Wawanoloath

By Christine Sioui-Wawanoloath

the beads is that the word itself is derived from the old English word "bede," which means to pray as well as referencing the prayer beads found in various religions.

The importance of the artist in the preservation of cultures is apparent after spending the afternoon at the Canadian Guild of Crafts. The gallery showcases the works by First Nations and Inuit artists from around the Quebec region. The displays are filled with gorgeous pieces that tell the story of a culture that has so much to offer.

Included in the works on display are those of Peter Pelchat, a Cree artist who has collaborated in the past with Beesum Communications to illustrate the "Adventures of Chikabash." His pieces contrast the traditional world with elements from modern life, such as a game controller. In another piece he showcases the beauty of a community coming together to build a tepee with the wonderful blue contrast of the sky.

The Montreal First peoples' Festival runs July 31 to August 9. Their webpage is at NativeLynx.qc.ca. The exhibition will be on display at The Canadian Guild of Craft on 1460 Sherbrooke Street West until August 11. If you would like to check out the works and hear from the artist, watch the video on our website nationnews.ca.

Norman Gull 1954–2012

The Board of Directors, staff, and members of COTA join the Cree Nation of Eeyou Istchee in expressing our deep sense of loss at the sudden passing of Norman Gull.

We would like to convey our heartfelt sympathies to the Gull family. There have been many tributes in honour of Norman's life, along with expressions of gratitude for all that he has accomplished through his tireless efforts on behalf of the Cree of Eeyou Istchee.

COTA owes a very special thank you to Norman for his steadfast vision about the importance of building a strong and sustainable tourism industry in Eeyou Istchee. He championed tourism as a major contributor to the Cree economy and a beacon for transmitting Cree culture to the world.

COTA was created by the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement in 1975; however, it wasn't until nearly 25 years later that the Association began its swift transformation under Norman's leadership into the fully operational organization it is today. Norman was directly involved in COTA's development since 2000 and held the position of President from 2001 to 2005. It was during this period that COTA began its rapid rise as a tourism-enabling organization.

Norman, your enlightened leadership was an immeasurable benefit for COTA, for which we will always be grateful.

COTA Board of Directors and Staff.

CREE OUTFITTING AND TOURISM ASSOCIATION
COTA

Eeyou Istchee Tourism
Tourisme Eeyou Istchee

Lubicon Lake Asks Canada to Stay Out of Community Affairs

In an attempt to reassert their sovereignty and enact self determination, the Lubicon Lake Nation of Little Buffalo, Alberta have called Canada back to the negotiating table after the government refused to deal with the Nation's rightful government over what they called a "leadership dispute."

According to the First Nation, the government refused to work with the Nation's Chief Ominayak and his Council after the government claimed that a separate group had declared rightful leadership but the First Nation said that this wasn't the case.

The First Nation sent Aboriginal Affairs Northern Development Canada Minister John Duncan a letter decreeing Ominayak as their Chief. It also requesting that the government remove their agents from the community and refrain from any further interference.

Law Suit Filled over Saskatchewan's First Nations Tobacco Tax

The Merchant Law Group, the same firm responsible for playing a major role in over 5 billion in residential school claims, has filed a class action suit on behalf of Aboriginal people regarding Saskatchewan's changes to their policy on tax free tobacco for First Nations people.

In 2010 the provincial government changed their on-reserve, tax-free tobacco allotment from three cartons per person to one carton per person. Merchant claims this is "unconstitutional, illegal, wrong and unreasonable."

Lawyer Tony Merchant said the law suit wasn't about the money but treaty

rights and not letting the government get away with it. He added this time it is cigarettes but next time it could be gasoline and so on.

"I hate to lead myself into doing things that aren't profitable and I hope to be pleasantly surprised, but I'd be shocked if this turns into anything profitable," said Merchant.

While Merchant is seeking what he calls "token judgments" of $25,000 or $500,000, he said that these would be only relative considering how much the legal battle will cost.

New Study Shows First Nations Girls have Higher Diabetes Rates

A new study by the University of Saskatchewan shows that the prevalence of diabetes in First Nations females has increased astronomically.

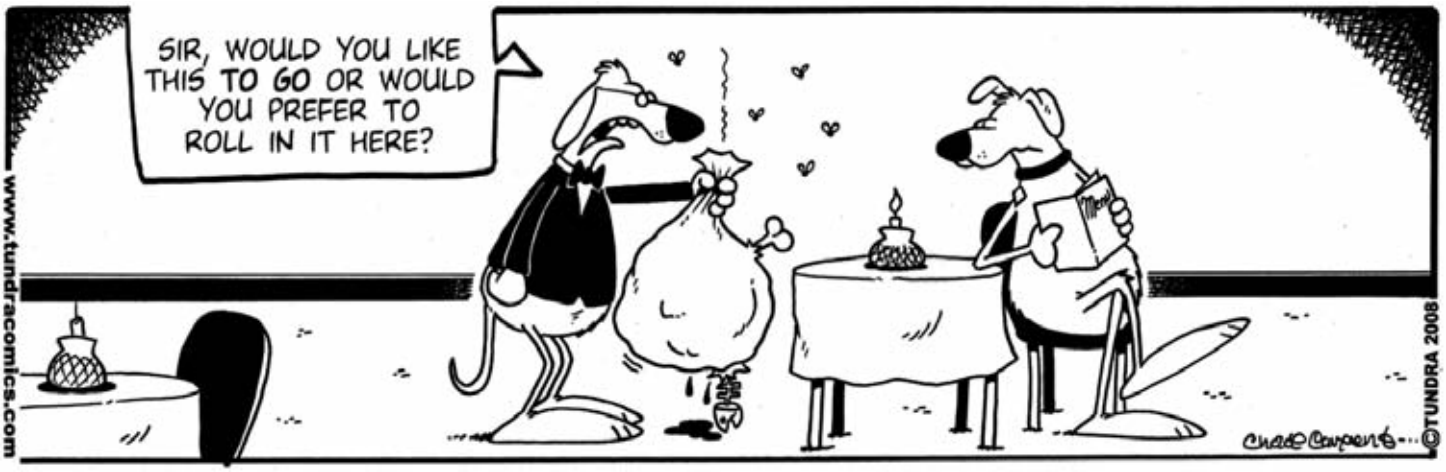
According to APTN news, over the last 25 years diabetes has increased 400 percent over the last 25 years.

Dr. Roland Dyck and Nathaniel Osgood from the Indigenous People's Health Research Centre used data from the Saskatchewan Ministry of Health for the study.

The study followed diabetes in children over those 25 years and the results showed that First Nations girls were the hardest hit in any group with the numbers climbing steadily over that period.

The study cited the consumption unhealthy food and reduced physical activity in First Nations girls as a reason for the extreme increase in diabetes. These are major contributing factors in First Nations populations in instances of diabetes prior to adulthood.

This particular study's research covers a longer time period than any other childhood diabetes study conducted in Canadian history.



feature

Cultural contacts

More than politics come alive at an AFN Conference

by Daniel David

Everyone knows that if you're not into the politics or personalities, the annual conference of Canada's chiefs of the Assembly of First Nations can be deadly boring. You meet a lot of people in hallways or grabbing a smoke-filled "health break" who will admit they aren't there for the meetings but for the chance to run into old friends, to drop off business cards at the trade fair, or to take in the entertainment. It might be business inside, but outside it's like a powwow without the drumming.

This year's AFN conference might have had a bit more attention than the last because it was also an election year. Four women were gunning for the top job of national chief. Even so, there were a lot of people who couldn't wait to head out and take in the entertainment. Since you've probably read all about the political stuff, let's take you on a tour of this other – much more fun – side of the AFN conference.

Just across the street from AFN's conference at the Toronto Metro Convention Centre, there's an old railway roundhouse. It's been transformed into the Steam Whistle Brewery. Inside a back entrance is a large space that's been turned into an art exhibit. It houses one of the most extensive collections of paintings by Norval Morriseau outside of the National Gallery of Canada.

Jessica Wilson is the curator. She's with a Toronto company called Westerkirk Works of Art. She spent months tracking contact after contact, from company to individual, looking for Morriseau paintings.

"It's amazing when you go from his early works to his later paintings," she says, motioning with a nod toward the collection. "You realize that he would sometimes paint on anything that happened to be handy. For instance," she moves to one wall, "this isn't painted on canvas. He picked up an old cardboard poster, turned it over, and painted on that. "

Moving further along, Wilson notes, "This painting is on brown paper. He didn't always have canvas so he used whatever was available."

Robert Houle is a well-known Cree painter from Manitoba who teaches painting at the Ontario College of Art in Toronto. Of Morriseau, Houle commented, "He was one of the first to take our teachings and his visions and put them into his paintings. He was criticized for doing that, even by his own Elders.

In honour of the delegates to the Assembly of First Nations Annual General Assembly
the AFN AGA 2012 Host Committee presents
A WELCOME CONCERT
a showcase of Ontario First Nation talent!
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Where: WestJet Stage
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Start Time: 7 p.m.
Cost: Free
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COPPER THUNDERBIRD

There was a lot of denial about our culture. But he painted anyway." Houle then gestures at the paintings in front of him. "He created something original and but also very old."

Grand Chief Stan Beardy of Treaty praised the work of the Curator, Jessica Wilson, and was gratified by the support that made the exhibit possible. "It was time people saw these paintings," he said.

The exhibit was sponsored by the Nishnawbe-Aski Nation, Chiefs of Ontario, the Royal Bank and TD Bank, among others. The exhibit would go on tour to northern Ontario after the AFN conference.

There was also music, food and theatre. It began at World Café at Harbourfront Centre with Chef David Wolfman providing a meal of venison and maple-glazed chicken before singer-songwriter, Crystal Shawanda, blues guitarist Derek Miller and others rocked evening away into the night next door at the WestJet Stage.

On the final evening of the AFN conference, over at the Elgin Theatre on Yonge Street, Herbie Barnes directed his play, "Sovereign Alliances." The play is about the First Nations who fought in and are credited with winning the War of 1812 against invading American forces, for the British colony that would later become Canada.

According to Barnes, "the play had an enthusiastic response" even though the AFN conference ended early and many ticket buyers had to leave for home earlier than expected. "But there's good news, too," Barnes adds. His production received an additional grant to modify it into a touring show so that it will have a life beyond its limited run.

We might get to see it after all, if the play comes to a theatre near you.

> "IT'S PERHAPS ONE OF THE MOST EXTENSIVE COLLECTIONS OF PAINTINGS BY NORVAL MORRISEAU OUTSIDE OF THE NATIONAL GALLERY OF CANADA."

A Healthy Future

Quebec and the Crees sign a new health care funding framework Agreement

by Amy German

The Crees and Quebec have signed a funding framework Agreement that will see the Crees of Eeyou Istchee begin important upgrade to the quality of their health care services.

The funding in this new agreement will support the operations of the CBHSSJB, capital investments in buildings, equipment and information systems from 2013 to March 31, 2018. Items for capital investments will be funded until March 31, 2020.

"With the signature today of the new health Agreement and funding framework, the Crees and Quebec are demonstrating their shared commitment to improving the health and social services provided to the Crees of Eeyou Istchee," said Grand Chief Coon Come at the signing.

"This is a tangible example of partnership between the Crees and Quebec to improve the lives of the people of Eeyou Istchee. It is this partnership that we, the Crees, wish to pursue with Quebec in other fields of activity, including governance, so that we share in the responsible and sustainable development of Eeyou Istchee for our common benefit," he added.

The signing took place in Chisasibi July 20 between Grand Chief Coon Come, James Bobbish, Chairman of the Cree Board of Health and Social Services of James Bay (CBHSSJB), Health and Social Services Minister Yves Bolduc and several other Quebec cabinet ministers, including Native Affairs Minister Geoffrey Kelley.

According to Roderick Pachano, a former Chief who was hired by the Grand Council to assist Cree-Quebec Negotiator Able Bosum at a special negotiating table for the CBHSSJB as part of the recent Governance talks between the province and the Crees, this current deal is to settle a claim filed against Quebec.

As Pachano explained, the claim filed was for non-implementation of a portion of the 2002 New Relationship Agreement, which included health board funding and implementation of Section 14 of the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement.

While the 2002 Agreement focused on creating a front line for services such as the creation of clinics and other facilities in the communities, this new deal's focus will be more about a strategic regional plan for the CBHSSJB, the development and consolidation of regional services as well as continued development and improvement of service delivery foreseen in the previous agreement.

"We are looking at $280 million in capital investments alone and this will be for a seven year period," said Pachano. "There are two parts to this agreement and that will be basically for operations and the health board and this is for five years and then the second part is the capitol itself and that is over a seven year period to build. The assumption is that this will be build over seven years instead of five years."

That means a number of new capital works projects will be coming for Cree health care service delivery, as well as new services throughout the communities. Housing will also be provided for those who will be administering the new services.

"The regional hospital here in Chisasibi will be replaced with a new facility that will have a series of new services added to it," noted Pachano. "The new facility is a huge project in relation to everything else up here and it will be scheduled to be finished within six to seven years."

According to Pachano this facility will serve both as a hospital and a walk-in clinic that will include a many number of state-of-the-art upgrades, an increase in beds and also a birthing clinic that will serve a few other surrounding communities.

While the facility in Chisasibi will also serve other communities like Whapmagoostui and Wemindji, it will not be the only community to receive a birthing centre. ONe is also planned for Mistissini and others could be announced.

In terms of other major service upgrades, the communities of

Waskaganish and Mistissini will also become equipped to offer Haemodialysis.

"The real cost up here is really huge as we have to spend on transporting people out of the communities for certain things and now we are going to try to bring these services into the communities as this will be less costly. Some of these facilities are going to have some very state of the art, high tech features as we are going to be working with telemedicine and tele-health," said Pachano

This new deal has also made way for new administrative buildings in Chisasibi for the CBHSSJB as staff had to move out of the current facility this past spring. Along with those buildings a new warehouse or utility shop to conduct repairs has also been slated for construction.

New spending has also been announced to improve youth protection and healing services, traditional healing centre and other services. There will be increased human resources regional support and training while information technology services will be augmented to support the CBHSSJB.

In addition to all of the new facilities, almost the entre region will be seeing the creation of 240 new homes to house those who will be filling all of the new positions.

"They have already built something like 260 to 270 in the last five years but those ones were financed through the communities. This time they will be getting the funding directly through the deal to services the mortgages," said Pachano.

"Chisasibi will be getting over 120 of these units and Mistissini will get something like 45 units. All of the communities will be getting something except Waswanip because they already have a temporary surplus there right now."

According to Pachano, these units will be comprised of single units all the way up to family homes in order to meet the needs of the new professionals soon to be employed by the health board.

While he could not confirm exactly how many new positions would be opening up by the expansions being made by the health board, Pachano said that there would be at least 240 as that was the number of units being built.

According to Pachano, there will also be a many number of opportunities for Cree youth to take advantage of the employment opportunities and in turn the housing opportunities that will be available through this agreement. The hope here is that as many of these positions as possible will go to Crees instead of relying on staff from outside of Eeyou Istchee.

With so many new health care and social service jobs on the horizon and an added employment boost resulting from the construction boom for the incredible amount of infrastructure involved in this Agreement, the opportunities for Crees are more numerous than ever. And most importantly: it could make for a healthier Cree Nation.

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Grabbing a Bite

Chisasibi's innovative Chajishapa Niguuitshtaan program heads into its second year

by Amy German

To ensure that elementary school students in Chisasibi have the fuel to power their minds in the classroom, Chisasibi's Chajishapa Niguuitshtaan (morning bite) program will be heading into its second year.

The idea behind the program is to give all children who haven't eaten or that haven't eaten enough that morning a chance to have a healthy snack.

According to Patrick Maillet, a former teacher in Chisasibi and project organizer for Chajishapa Niguuitshtaan, the inspiration for this project came from within the classroom.

"From my experience at the school I had always heard people say that they should start this kind of a program. I had always noticed and known when kids weren't eating a very good breakfast (if any at all). There was another teacher who was serving his students breakfast in the class next to mine and he had his own toaster and stuff and it made me think that we should really serve the kids something in the mornings," said Maillet.

While it isn't difficult to see that any child who is hungry will generally have difficulty performing just about any task, according to research published in the Journal of Nutrition Education, children who ate a healthy breakfast had higher energy levels and better learning ability than students who did not eat breakfast.

And so in going with the old adage, that "breakfast is the most important meal of the day," the morning snack program came about as a community initiative with the assistance of the Katimavik Program, as well as various entities within the school and the Cree Board of Health and Social Services of James Bay (CBHSSJB).

As Maillet explained, initially the program began as a breakfast program. But after the project organizers surveyed the children at the elementary school they found that almost 90 percent of the kids had actually had some form of breakfast before they headed to school though not every child had had a complete breakfast.

The program's spokesperson, Elder Charlie Pepanano, also had concerns about the program taking the full responsibility for feeding all of the community's children every morning.

"He brought out some interesting points such as not to disrespect responsible parents and that he was also afraid that parents would think that they didn't have to feed their kids if they were being fed at school. It could be a bad habit as if the program were ever to run out there would be kids going hungry," said Maillet.

With that in mind, the program took on a new form, looking to give everyone a little snack of the food groups they may have otherwise gone without.

Because most of the community's children would have already had cereal or toast, giving them enough sugars and carbohydrates, filing in the gaps with protein and fresh fruit became the objective.

Now, between the snacks and the already existing milk program, the kids who need it can get a real nutritional boost to help their minds focus on learning.

"What the teachers seem to like is that they can either give the fruit in the morning and then maybe give the protein midway through the day, depending on what it is, like with yoghurt it could be more complicated or just a piece of cheese and then give them the milk in the afternoon and so it really gives them a lot of flexibility," said Maillet.

"There is also always a little bit of leftover so the school nurse can give extras that to kids who may not have eaten for whatever reason."

While funding for the food costs have been provided by the CBHSSJB, according to Maillet this program will need more community volunteers to keep it running this year as Katimavik's mandate has been cut by the federal government.

According to Maillet, however, there are many within Chisasibi who want to volunteer in this program that there confidence that the program will receive the support it needs in the future.

"THERE WAS ANOTHER TEACHER WHO WAS SERVING HIS STUDENTS BREAKFAST IN THE CLASS NEXT TO MINE AND HE HAD HIS OWN TOASTER AND STUFF AND IT MADE ME THINK THAT WE SHOULD REALLY SERVE THE KIDS SOMETHING IN THE MORNINGS."

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Food Preservation

Told by Maria Scipio
Translated and transcribed by Brian Webb
www.beesum-communications.com/legends

I'll talk about how food was handled in the past. Everything was kept. This is what I'll talk about. This was when the Canada Geese were still abundant.

In September, the geese were plentiful. Even though so much geese were harvested, every part of the goose was still kept and saved. This was before freezers were available. The women still managed to keep and save everything.

The women worked non-stop cleaning geese during the time of plenty. They cleaned and dried the geese in their cooking teepees. This was before freezers were around. When freezers became available for us, we still kept and saved the different parts that were edible.

Even the feathers were not thrown away. We also keep the down feathers to this day. The outer feathers are kept separate.

During the time when geese are fat, we made dried geese. Sometimes, the very fat geese was skinned and sliced so that the fat could be fried and rendered in a cast iron pot. That fried skin tasted delicious and it wasn't greasy. We rendered a lot of goose grease.

Even the goose intestines were kept and saved and the grease was rendered. Even the intestines that were falling apart, we still boiled them to render the grease. This grease was kept separate. The goose belly fat was fried to render the grease, and the grease from the skin as kept separate as well.

The throats of geese were collected if there were no pellet holes. The lining was peeled and then inflated to dry. It didn't take long to dry. These were used to contain grease. Many of these grease casing were made and kept in cold storage so the grease could solidify. When we wanted to eat the grease, the grease incased in the dried esophagus was sliced.

Goose grease was so important and carefully saved. This was because when dry meat was boiled in the winter, the grease was eaten with the dry meat. When dried meat was boiled, the grease was eaten with it. Eating this type of food was delicious and nothing was thrown away.

All the women made dry meat. They even dried the goose wings after cutting away the long bones. The meaty part was kept on the wing and hung over the fire. Dry meat was made so that it could be kept for later.

We also cleaned the goose heads. We cut off the skulls that wasn't meaty. The neck and the jaw were attached together and hung over the fire. Even this dripped with grease as they smoked over the fire. They hung over the fire for a short time. Before freezers were available, the dry meat was hung in the rafters of the teepee.

Once the meat was totally dry, it couldn't go bad. These are what people kept and saved. These different parts of geese were packed separately by women. The smoke dried goose skin was stored separately as well.

Today, we don't totally dry geese anymore. We simply cook the goose parts for a short time. Then we put it in the freezers. The food cannot spoil.

Even the goose gizzards. We slice the gizzards into long thin strips and hang them over the fire. We don't let them cook too long. Once they're cooked, we take them away from the fire. We let them sit there. Once they've cooled down, we freeze them.

"THE THROATS OF GEESE WERE COLLECTED IF THERE WERE NO PELLET HOLES. THE LINING WAS PEELED AND THEN INFLATED TO DRY. IT DIDN'T TAKE LONG TO DRY. THESE WERE USED TO CONTAIN GREASE."

This is how we store and keep geese. This is what everyone does at our camp. Nothing from the goose is thrown away. We were not allowed to be careless with this type of food.

The down feathers that we keep, we make down feather blankets out of them. These are so warm. We used to send out the outer feathers to sell them. We can't do this today. But these outer feather can still be used. You can make a good mattress out of the outer feathers. It is made the same way as a down feather blanket. These were what we used as mattresses in the past.

photo by Brian Webb

Maria Scipio

Once the fabric was sewn, it was stuffed with feathers. These were used as mattresses. The down feathers were used for making blankets. We still use them today. Nothing is thrown out. Only the flight feathers are not kept.

Every part of the goose is used and kept. When we still dried geese, we even dried the goose feet. They were cut in a certain way to dry. They were rinsed first. We spliced them and hung them on a string. We hung the feet in the teepee to dry. We boiled them for a long time to eat them.

This is what we do with the goose. When geese were still abundant, there was great joy when cleaning the geese. I'll stop talking about the goose.

We handed the ducks the same way. We cook them over the fire, even if we can't eat them all right away. We still make dried ducks. The duck is cut into a long sheet and hung over the fire. This is what we do with this type of food.

When we camp out in the bush during springtime, we do the same thing with fish. People keep and save fish. The fish are dried totally also. The suckers are good for making dried fish and pounded to make powdered fish. They are first hung over the fire and then hung in the rafters of the teepee to dry.

Once they are totally dry, that's when they're taken down. This is when they're pounded or kept to be pounded later. A nice smooth round stone was used to make powdered fish. The hammer stone was used to pound the fish. This was also nicely made. This was how people made powdered fish.

When dogs were still in use, fish were also dried for them so they could eat in the summer. The fish for dogs were also dried. Powdered fish for the dogs were kept separately.

The fish heads were skewered on a roasting stick and roasted by the fire. The fish heads were also dried. These were to be used for dog food. People cooked food for the dogs. The powdered fish was boiled for the dogs. During the summer, dried fish was boiled for the summer when we were in the community. When we were out in the bush, we gave them the fish right away after we had checked the fishnets.

Everything from the fish was also kept. All the food was dried, even the food for the dogs. Dry smoked fish were also made. We don't do this today because we have freezers. We don't make dry meat as much. So the fish we keep in the freezer is tender. This is how we keep fish also.

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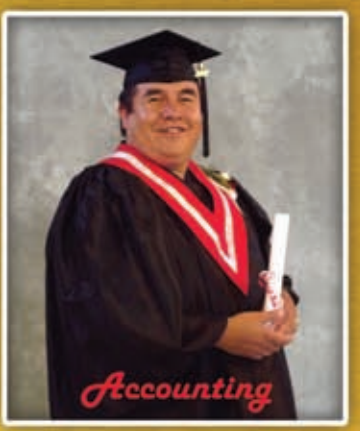

Pictures by Harriet Petawabano Trapper

One Step Closer to Olympic Gold

by Daniel Coyle

"I'm praying for a wild card," Mary Spencer said recently in an interview with the Toronto Star after being eliminated from the Olympic qualifying boxing tourney. "The only thing better than winning Olympic gold would be winning gold after qualifying via wild card."

And that is exactly the position that Spencer, a three-time world champion and five-time Pan-American champion boxer, currently finds herself in at the London Olympics, after being selected as a wild card by the International Olympic Committee, and receiving a favourable draw that puts the 27-year-old Ojibwa from the Cape Croker First Nation in Ontario just one victory away from a medal at the 2012 Games.

Indeed, Spencer, as the sole Aboriginal on Canada's Olympic team, must now be considered a favourite to win gold in the 75-kilogram middleweight weight class.

"It's like a second chance and it reminds me of when I first started boxing, I felt like I was given a second chance and I was able to prove myself through boxing," Spencer told the Star.

"And now I feel like I'm in that position once again. I never expected to be but I feel like I am and I can't wait to really make the most and the best of the situation."

There are 12 boxers in each of the women's boxing weight classes. By virtue of the random draw, Spencer received a bye through the first round, allowing the eight-time Canadian champ to rest up in anticipation of her fight against the winner of the first round match-up between 2010 World Champion Roseli Feitosa of Brazil and the 2008 World Champ and defending Asian Champion, Jinzi Li of China.

"I'm completely ready," Spencer told Yahoo! Sports. "I was just telling my coaches that I feel like the timing is perfect. I'm feeling that peak and I'm looking forward to fighting."

While Spencer recently signed a lucrative endorsement deal with cosmetics giant CoverGirl, and has been as much of a knockout on magazine covers as she has been in the ring, the former high school basketball star avoided the media spotlight in recent weeks as she prepared for her Olympic moment. That meant shunning Olympic training facilities, instead making her final preparations at a small, non-descript boxing gym tucked away on a London street corner called Rooney's – the gym of choice for a number of notable British boxers, past and present.

"The set-up has been awesome," Spencer told Steve Buffery of the Toronto Sun. "Training in a spot like this reminds us that it's just boxing.

"We don't feel like we're at the Olympics. We're just in a crummy gym and it's just real comfortable. It feels like we're at home."

Mary Spencer

Along with the support of boxing fans from across Canada, Spencer can also count on the support of recently re-elected Assembly of First Nations National Chief Shawn Atleo, who congratulated Spencer on her Olympic berth and was quick to point out the important work that Spencer continues to do in First Nation communities across the country.

"I commend Mary Spencer's determination and dedication to sport and fitness, which has helped her achieve incredible success in achieving her goals both in and outside the boxing ring," said Atleo.

"Adding to the list of other Indigenous Olympians committed to inspiring and motivating young people, Mary enthusiastically spends time in First Nation communities meeting with youth to discuss the benefits of a healthy lifestyle in achieving goals. Mary is a true role model for all young people, particularly young Indigenous women."

In addition to her time spent in the ring, Spencer is also a Gen7 messenger, encouraging Aboriginal youth to live an active and healthy lifestyle through sport and physical activity. She also earned a spot on the list of the 20 Most Influential Women in Sport and Physical Activity for 2011 by the Canadian Association for the Advancement of Women and Sport and Physical Activity (CAAWS).

Wabun Youth Gathering features mini powwow

by Xavier Kataquapit

The Sixth Annual Wabun Youth Gathering was held in Elk Lake, Ontario, from July 16 to 27. Pictured are facilitators and dancers Wayne McKenzie, (centre) Temiskaming First Nation and Dana Cosgrove, (left) Mattagami First Nation leading Wabun youth during the grand entry of a mini powwow held July 19.

The sixth annual Wabun Youth Gathering held at the Eco Centre Lodge in Elk Lake July 16-20 featured a mini powwow, traditional teachings and workshops with an Aboriginal focus. Eighty-five Wabun youth attended the event sponsored by Wabun Tribal Council Health Services.

The event was divided into two parts. The first week from July 16 to 20 was held for junior youth aged from eight to 12 and the second week from July 23 to 27 was for senior youth aged 13 to 18. The first week of events featured facilitators Wayne McKenzie of Temiskaming First Nation and Dana Cosgrove of Mattagami First Nation. McKenzie, a traditional teacher and dancer, instructed the male youth on preparations and ceremonies concerning powwows and dance. Cosgrove provided presentations for female youth in traditional dances, teachings and songs.

The end of first week was celebrated with a mini powwow on July 19 developed by the youth.

The senior week featured a series of workshops by Maria Trevizo, an internationally renowned Aboriginal speaker who has worked with many Aboriginal communities and organizations in the United States, Canada and Mexico. A psychiatric technician and substance abuse counsellor, she also performs as a traditional singer and facilitator. Trevizo's work is focused on providing support and guidance to youth, women and the two-spirit community through traditional knowledge and cultural ceremonies.

"I really think the Wabun Tribal Council is doing a great service to their young people with this gathering. It has been a pleasure to work the Wabun youth and to be part of such a positive process," said Trevizo.

Jean Lemieux, Health Director for Wabun Health Services, said that the annual event has grown over the years through the support of Wabun Chiefs, Elders, community members and most importantly, the young people.

"It felt so powerful to see our youth coming into the grand entry of the powwow and I know a lot of people got very emotional. My generation did not have the opportunities that our Wabun youth have today in learning the teachings and culture of our people. We also really appreciate the support of Ontario Power Generation (OPG) and Home Depot of Timmins," said Lemieux.

Many Wabun youth have been attending the annual gathering for years and some like Samuel Kloetstra-Naveau, of Mattagami First Nation, have taken over chaperone roles to assist and guide younger participants.

"IN MY LIFE. I HAVE LEARNED ABOUT MY NATIVE TRADITIONS AND CULTURE AND THAT WILL HELP ME IN THE FUTURE."

"I have been coming here for years now and it has really made a difference in my life. I have learned about my Native traditions and culture and that will help me in the future," said Kloetstra-Naveau.

Two traditional drum groups powered the dancing, including the Iron Stone Drummers of Temiskaming First

Nation and the Big Bear Claw Singers of Brunswick House First Nation.

Elder Vina Hendrix, Matachewan FN, led the group in opening and closing prayers and was instrumental in assisting everyone with traditional and cultural knowledge.

"I always like to attend this annual event because it is an opportunity for our youth to learn so much. I want to thank all of our chaperones who assisted with days of sewing to make sure that our young people had their regalia ready for their traditional dancing," commented Elder Hendrix.

Elder, Councillor and past Chief of Mattagami First Nation, Morris Naveau was on hand to provide cultural teachings and story telling to youth as well as conducting opening and closing prayers.

"As a survivor of the residential school system, it is a very moving event for me to see our young people learning about their culture and being proud as Aboriginal people," said Elder Naveau.

Chief Marcia Martel-Brown, Beaverhouse First Nation was on hand to assist as chaperone and provide daily traditional morning songs. Chief Alex (Sonny) Batisse of Matachewan FN visited to show his support. Wabun First Nation Councillors attending the event included Charmaine Saunders, Brunswick House; Jennifer Constant, Mattagami; Lionel Boucher, Matachewan and Deputy Chief Theresa Lafrenier, Beaverhouse. Nishnawbe-Aski Nation (NAN) was represented at the event by Stephen Kudaka, Oshkaatisak Coordinator.

Mike Archer, the Community Crisis Coordinator for Wabun Health Services, has been coordinating the event for the past six years.

"A lot of our chiefs could not attend the event this year due to the election for National Chief in meetings in Toronto. However, we had a good turnout of councillors who represented their communities. More and more our efforts are involving passing on the traditional teachings and culture to our young people and over the years I have seen a lot of positive changes as a result," said Archer.

Senior youth and organizers who took part in traditional teachings and hands on workshops at the sixth annual Wabun Youth Gathering.

Junior participants at the sixth annual Wabun Youth Gathering.

The Wabun Youth Gathering developed from of the vision and guidance of the late Elder Thomas Saunders, Brunswick House FN, who wanted to see the Wabun communities coming together in one gathering. Wabun Tribal Council represents the six First Nation communities of Beaverhouse, Brunswick House, Chapleau Ojibwe, Flying Post, Matachewan and Mattagami in Northeastern Ontario. It is directed by its respective Chiefs.

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UNDER THE NORTHERN SKY

Dancing on the edge

by Xavier Kataquapit

I am sitting here watching the rain sprinkling down from a grey sky onto the lake. It is a quiet rain. There is very little wind and that adds to the laziness of my morning.

I am nestled in the midst of a vast wilderness and kilometres upon kilometres of pine tree forests. I imagine the rich green forests and all the foliage welcome this rain. The lake will be a little chilly for a few days so my daily swim should be refreshing. That is okay.

I love swimming in northern lakes. The more isolated they are, the more pure and unpolluted. Esker lakes are my favourite as normally they are the remains of a glacial past, when kilometre high sheets of ice once moved on and covered the landscape. The banks of these lakes are large deposits of fine sand, which act as giant filters to help create gorgeous turquoise bodies of water.

There hasn't been that much rain this year, even in the far north, but things could be worse. The mid west bread basket of the United States is experiencing a terrible drought. This year we have seen many floods and huge storms in places where these are usually rare, while a drought has come to what is normally a bountiful farmland.

Weather systems are very important. Even little changes in temperature can affect large parts of the planet in tragic ways. The drought over the farmland will mean a food shortage on the world market and that will drive up the prices of all grain products. That will be hard enough for the lucky 10 percent population of the world that lives in the First World. For populations in developing countries, it could be deadly: there may not be enough food to go around.

When it comes to climate, we are teetering on the edge. As a matter of fact, right now we have been enjoying a moment of balance but if you look at weather on earth over thousands of years, most of the time things have been quite violent with periods of great warmth and then terrible freezing.

We know that in the distant past, events like the impacts of comets or meteors have resulted in huge changes in weather patterns for all kinds of reasons and wiped out a lot of life on the planet. Scientists can also point to vast eruptions of volcanoes in our history that resulted in weather changes primarily because of the great amount of dust, debris and ash that are sent up into the atmosphere and block out the sun.

For the first time, however, we humans are having an impact because of the large-scale destruction of major forest areas on the planet, the out-of-control production of greenhouse gases and wonton carelessness when it comes to taking care of the land, the water and the creatures of earth. Compared to colossal events, our negative activities are not all that great but when you consider the accumulated impact of every careless thing we have done over the past couple hundred years; we play a role in tipping the balance.

It should not be so difficult for us as human kind to work together and try to limit the ways we pollute our planet. We should not let the very shortsighted one percent of our population who are only concerned with making a profit decide our future. You would think that we are intelligent enough at this point to realize that we are really space travellers and living on this wonderful planet while drifting across the universe. It is the only home we have. Somehow through the magic of life we have evolved on this beautiful Mother Earth. Compared to the time line of the existence of our planet, we as humans have only been here for an instant, yet more than any other creature, we have had a greater negative impact than any life form before us.

As humans, we are creatures who generally don't look very far into the future. We don't react until we are being banged over the head. How many severe droughts or terrible storms will it take before we realize we are part of a problem in regards to climate change? Native Elders tell us that we should learn the ways of survival on the land from our ancestors. They say this for many reasons but one of them has to do with the reality that life could get very hard and set back many generations because of our greed and insensitivity.

The rain is still dancing lightly across the lake in a million tiny splashes. For the moment, I am one of the lucky ones to enjoy a region with few people but my world is rich in life.

CLASSIFIEDS

BIRTHDAYS

Marshall C. Salt 1 years old sah you have made our lives such a joy! Happy Birthday July 19, 2012 to our big boy Logan C. Salt Happy Birthday 3 years old August 10, 2012 you complete our little family we love you both so much it hurts love mommy and daddy oxoxoxoxoxo

CONGRATULATIONS

I would like to congratulate all of my graduating classmates, in Wemindji keep working hard and see you all in the near future. From your former classmate,

Alyssa Ottereyes.

August 1, 2012 already my grandson is a month old, time sure flies.

Congratulations to my daughter Georgina and Sheldon on the birth of their baby boy Henrik Daniel Kesler on July 1, 2012.I was overwhelmed to have witnessed the birth of my grandson. Thanks, Inndaansh!! Love always, Mom!! <3 (Sharon Moses)

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS

Where to get help: bilingual, anonymous, confidential and free phone services, 24 hours a day 7 days a week.

Kid's Help Phone Line: 1-800-668-6868 (www.kidshelpphone.ca)

Youth Helpline: 1-800-263-2266 (www.teljeunes.com)

Parents' Helpline: 1-800-361-5085 (www.parenthelpline.ca)

Missing Children's Network: They'll help you find kids who have run away or disappeared. 514-843-4333 (www.enfant-retourquebec.ca)

Drug Addiction help and reference: 1-800-265-2626 (www.drogue-aidereference.qc.ca)

Gambling Addiction help and reference: 1-800-265-2626 (www.info-reference.qc.ca)

S.O.S. Conjugal Violence: 1-800-363-9010 (www.sosviolenceconjugale.com)

Health and Sexuality Resources Center: 1-888-855-7432 (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm) (www.criss.org)

Gay Helpline: 1-888-505-1010 (Monday to Friday, 8 am to 3 am and Saturday-Sunday, 11 am to 3 am)

The Native Women's Shelter of Montreal: 1-866-403-4688 (www.nwsm.info)

Suicide Action Québec: 1-866-277-3553 (www.suicide-quebec.net/)

Residential School Survivors: A 24 hour toll-free crisis line is available to provide immediate emotional assistance and can be reached 24-hours a day, seven days a week: 1-866-925-4419. Other support services and information for survivors is available on the AFN website at: www.afn.ca/residentialschools/resources

AVIS PUBLIC

Le Comité d'examen (COMEX) tiendra une consultation publique sur le projet de la mine diamantifère Renard. La compagnie « Les Diamants Stornoway Inc» est le promoteur de ce projet, situé à 360 km au nord de Chibougamau.

Les séances se tiendront les :

28 août 2012 : à l'école Voyageur de Mistissini à compter de 19 h.

29 août 2012 : au Club de golf de Chibougamau, 130 rue des Forces Armées, à compter de 19h.

Des copies de l'étude d'impact sur l'environnement et le milieu social seront mises à la disposition de la population au bureau du Conseil de bande de Mistissini et au bureau de l'Hôtel de ville de Chibougamau. Une version électronique peut être obtenue en transmettant la demande à secretariat.comex@mddep.gouv.qc.ca. Afin de mieux planifier le déroulement des séances, nous apprécierions être avisés à l'avance de votre intention de présenter oralement vos commentaires sur le projet, au 418-521-3933, poste 4864 ou à l'adresse courriel indiquée précédemment.

PUBLIC NOTICE

The Review Committee (COMEX) will hold a public consultation on the Renard diamond mine project. The project proponent is Stornoway Diamonds Inc and the mine is located 360 km, North of Chibougamau.

The sessions will be held on:

August 28th 2012: in Mistissini at the Voyageur Memorial school starting at 7:00 pm

August 29th 2012: in Chibougamau at the Golf Club, 130 rue des Forces Armées, starting at 7:00 pm

Copies of the environmental and social impact study will be available for the population at the Band Council office in Mistissini, and at the Town hall in Chibougamau. An electronic version can be obtained by sending a request at secretariat.comex@mddep.gouv.qc.ca. In order to schedule more efficiently the sessions, we would appreciate being informed in advance of your intention to present an oral brief on the project, at the following number (418) 521-3933 ext. 4864 or at the previous email address.

Convention de la Baie-James et du Nord québécois
James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement
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Scan to enter on Facebook* - "Like" our page, post your answer on our wall

Contest ends August 27th, 2012 at 11:59 pm
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You can also **enter the contest** at Facebook.com/NATIONnewsmagazine or Nationnews.ca

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